

1492.

COLUMBIA.

1892.

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THE  
PROPOSED CELEBRATION  
OF THE  
DISCOVERY OF AMERICA  
WITHIN THE EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
AND SOLELY BY  
NATIONAL AUTHORITY.

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WASHINGTON, D. C., DECEMBER 15TH, 1889.

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VIEWS OF THE  
HON. S. C. POMEROY,  
IN SUPPORT OF  
SENATE BILL 612,  
INTRODUCED BY HON. JOHN J. INGALLS, OF KANSAS.

*December 5th, 1889.*

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WASHINGTON, D. C. :  
GIBSON BROS., PRINTERS AND BOOKBINDERS  
1889.

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## TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

### TO AMERICANS EVERYWHERE.

No event in human history, no discovery by Newton or Copernicus, no achievement in art or science since the appearance of the Christ-Child of Judea meant so much for human welfare as the Christ-opher Columbus of 1492.

This American continent had enjoyed the repose of the ages. Its sleep had been unbroken. "There was not a man to till the ground."

The great rivers of the continent had moved onward to the oceans for unnumbered years; Niagara had poured her endless waters, and the untrodden mountains had towered in their magnificence, but no commerce was borne on the former, and no miner dug gold in the latter. So the centuries came, and so they went.

Upon other lands civilization had begun her triumphs. Its light had dawned. "A vine had been brought out of Egypt. The heathen had been driven out to plant it." And it flourished. Great efforts to establish a government for man had been made, and repeated under conditions more or less favorable for success. Experiments had been tried, indeed, all the nations of the Old World had made efforts for an equitable civil government, but with ever varying successes. The great "Mistress of the World" had appeared, conquered, and triumphed, and then measurably disappeared. In the meantime a race of men destined to dominate, and born to rule, had appeared upon

the Island of Great Britain, subdued their enemies, and established civil government. They founded free schools, preached a free gospel, recognized human rights and civil liberty, in a civilization which is the hope of the world.

The government in the mother country was a thousand years old when the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, and yet, *constitutional Liberty in written Law*, had been nowhere well established.

I repeat that a free government for man, adapted for men of all nations, and for all times, where human liberty and equal civil rights were to be embodied in a written constitution, *and Liberty under Law, the one God of the Nation*, had been nowhere successfully accomplished.

This great American Continent, unexplored and unknown, lay in the Western Hemisphere, in the embrace of barbarism, awaiting the advent of its Lord.

When 1492 dawned upon Europe, discoveries led by Columbus opened this grand theatre for the entertainment and establishment of Christian civilization.

The curtains which had hung over the western waters were to be uplifted, and one man, inspired with the conception of a New World, undertook amidst most appalling discouragements to find it. He applied for aid, and the officials of all countries turned away from his appeals. No State, no nation, would venture in such an enterprise. The Cardinals of the Church even suggested that "Columbus be drowned in the deep sea!"

Again was exemplified the old story, "*Struggles before victory.*"

At last one noble woman listened to the enthusiasm of the young Columbus. She proffered the jewels from her person and placed them at his service.

After this were the means provided for the expedition. And such an expedition! and meaning so much! This

voyage involved the *character* of Christopher Columbus more even than he valued his life. And more than that and more than any man then conceived or dared to hope it involved the destiny of mankind in the purposes of Almighty God!

That voyage tested the faith and pluck of *the one man* who had adopted this expedition as the dream of his life. His courage gave inspiration to those who became disheartened. And the sight of land, in the month of October, 1492, was like a gilded morning rising upon a night of darkness and tempest.

The problem of a Western World was now solved. Other expeditions followed. There were plenty of men now who claimed that they knew of a Western World all this time, and long before.

But history has been just to the memory of this one man, and, surrounding the name of Christopher Columbus, is written the glory.

The planting of a nation when only such facilities as were then known to man were at hand, was an immense undertaking. The good and the bad elements in human character were alike engaged in the work. More than the first century was consumed in the excitement of new discoveries.

And when at last the planting of States began there was no oneness of sentiment or of purpose. For human freedom and human slavery were introduced the same year. Sixteen hundred and twenty is no more memorable for the landing of Pilgrims, than for the landing of slaves! The one came over in a frail bark and landed at Plymouth, the other, in a Dutch vessel, landed at Jamestown. Thus were planted two systems of civilizations, instead of one, in the same year, and both systems had their race upon this continent for more than 250 years.

At last, in our day and time, this one inconsistency of American liberty has passed forever away, and the "one blood," of which "all the nations are made," is now involved in American citizenship. So that after 100 years of our constitutional period, and 400 from national discovery, we are for the first time prepared to celebrate the grand meaning of planting this American Nation upon this unoccupied American Continent, a land reserved for ages in order to be dedicated to this great purpose. For a second time in the world's history "has a vine been brought out of Egypt: the heathen driven out to plant it."

In all this, however, men "builded better than they knew." To celebrate such an achievement, and for the American Nations to make suitable exhibitions of their progress and developments of *four hundred years*, is a work of no ordinary magnitude.

It is conceded that it must be held under the sanction and authority of the United States. It must be a *National* and *International Celebration*. The President must be *authorized* to extend the invitations, and Congress must make due preparation for the entertainment, and its benefits are so apparent that the people of *all the States* should be only too glad to share the expense.

To lay this subject before the people, and to properly introduce it to the Congress of the United States, is no small task. To this end all selfishness and all thought of personal gain or loss must be swallowed up in the one object—*the success of the Celebration*. The plans for that object should be well matured.

First. No place can be as appropriate as the Capital of such a nation: for the United States occupy the central portion of the continent. The provinces in the far North and the countries of the South can mutually and conveniently meet at this centre, and an appropriate centre it is.

Washington, embracing the District named for this Columbus—where the laws are made, and the law-makers congregate; where all executive function presides; where sits the Supreme Court, the glory of our system of national jurisprudence; where are located the grandest Department Buildings of the world, and the National Museum; where, in the process of building, is the noblest Library House ever seen in all the ages of learning and civilization; where reside the seat of diplomacy and the home of the diplomats; where rests the Army, the Navy, and the Treasury, containing more money and less matured debt than any national treasury in the world. What place, what city, can command such attractions, save the Capital of such a nation? And especially so, as this District is the only place where “national jurisdiction” and “exclusive legislation” are provided for in the fundamental law.

This prerequisite of authority in the premises, is not obtained in any State, or any city of a State. And all such claims for the Columbus Exhibition of 1892 are confronted by legal obstacles which cannot be overcome in season for the needed preparation.

The title for such a site as is needed cannot be acquired from unwilling owners, in a State, by appraisement and condemnation. The *national authority* for this cannot be exercised in a State, for the State has no authority to acquire title in this way for the uses of the General Government. And that Government cannot exercise such authority unless the State cedes it, and the State cannot cede it, except the United States acquire the title.

Again, it has been decided, over and over again, that the General Government cannot exercise control over land in a State, except for the uses provided for in the Constitution, such as customs and the post-office uses, etc. And even this provision does not carry with it authority to

control the site, until the jurisdiction be ceded by the State. The State then looses the right to tax it, or to govern it.

The obstacles in the way of National control of the exhibition-site, *in a State*, are so great that it is best to abandon the effort before it is undertaken.

I know of no way it can be secured from unwilling owners of the land.

The one place free from all embarrassments is the District of Columbia.

This is *National ground*. The people of the whole country are at home here. Here is exclusive jurisdiction.

It is the grandest capital of the grandest nation on the face of the globe.

As this Republic is to be the controlling centre of the English-speaking people of the world, so this Capital city shall be its concentrating focus; and all English civilization shall revolve about it.

The beginning of such an epoch is now at hand. Already business and commercial alliances are being formed, our own corporations are being bought up, and such commingling of European and American capital forecasts the grand political alliance, which shall ere long secure the peace of all the world.

To inaugurate and carry forward such an exhibition is a work of National magnitude. The whole matter should be placed in the hands of a National Commission to be called the "*Celebration Commission*," to be composed of two men, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, from each of the 42 States, two from the District of Columbia, and one from each of the Territories.

When thus appointed they should meet, and apportion the work to such sub-committees as may be necessary, and the lesser committees should have the full powers of



the whole Commission upon the subject-matter committed to it; such a Commission equalling in numbers the American Senate, and we may hope not inferior to it in ability and patriotism. Into the hands of such a Commission, Congress can afford to place all the appropriations, and leave all the responsibility to their management, from the beginning to the end.

This having been provided for, Congress should place in the hands (or at the disposal of the Commission), under the approval of the President, sufficient money to purchase, by appraisement and condemnation, 300 acres of ground as sites for buildings and appurtenances upon the elevated plateau of land overlooking the city upon the north or east, and not included in Mount Pleasant.

Ten acres of this ground, not including what may be necessary for streets, should be set apart for the uses of the National Government, and two and one-half acres for the use and occupancy of each of the States, and this same amount (not lessened by streets) for each of the Spanish-speaking States south of us, or of their central governments if they so elect, and five acres for the Republic of Brazil; and the same amount for the Dominion of Canada, with two and one-half acres for each of the lesser provinces.

Congress should authorize the free use and occupancy only of these respective parcels of ground, leaving all and each of the occupants to erect such exhibition halls and places of exhibition as their own tastes and means may allow, and all at their own expense; the purpose being to concentrate and congregate at this Capital an exhibition of the handiwork of all the peoples of the Continent, with their varieties in language, products, and achievements; and such a congregated show of all American Nationalities will be an admirable spectacle to gods, to angels, and to

men. It marks the progress of human development and stimulates to the greatest achievements within the possibilities of created intelligence.

And not only is this true of American Nations, but all European countries have mingled their blood and are amalgamating with American citizens. And this process will not sooner Europeanize America than it will Americanize all Europe. And they are now ready to celebrate human achievements with the nations of this continent.

And should such European nations signify to the President their wish and purpose to join in such an exhibition for the benefit of mankind, and desire a place alongside of us, for their products and achievements, then the Congress of the United States should authorize the purchase, "by this Commission," giving five acres of ground for each European nation that accepts it for this purpose, upon the same terms and conditions as are enjoyed by American nations. Thus let also the Empire of Japan, which is already adopting our civilization, and has signified a wish to participate with us, be also provided for. Let all come who wish to come. It is a convocation in the interest of all human achievements, and will tend to the advancement of mankind and secure the peace of the world. In such an undertaking we may well pause to reflect upon its dangers and benefits.

The dangers will lie in our want of conception of the magnitude of the Exhibition and failure to enlist National support. To this end every citizen of Washington, every business and professional man, and especially the press, of this city should now be earnestly enlisted.

With this local aid and preparation, thoroughly utilized, the early action of Congress will be necessary. To be successful there, the appropriations, modest in amount, must all be administered upon by the Commission provided by law. Something like the following will be required :

For exhibition grounds (or so much thereof as found necessary).....	\$5,000,000
For grading the streets and clearing the lots, &c.....	1,500,000
For buildings necessary for the General Government.....	500,000
For expenses incident to the celebration and necessary thereto .....	1,000,000
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Making in all.....	\$8,000,000

That sum placed at the control of the Commission, with the co-operation of the President of the United States, Executive officers, and Governors of States, and State legislatures, and success will be assured.

I cannot enlarge upon the benefits of such a celebration. They are unspeakable and full of glory. Pecuniary advantages may be calculated by millions of dollars for every thousand expended.

But there are other considerations besides dollars and dimes. There is for this nation power, dignity, and glory, which money cannot purchase. Think of a government and institutions planted upon an unappropriated continent, which had been reserved and preserved for this purpose ; a government which had no precedent in the world's history ; a government securing inalienable rights to men in the fundamental law ; a government embracing all humanity in its terms of citizenship—shall yet become the controlling centre of the civilizations of the world. Older nations which cannot recuperate or expand will gravitate to such a centre. The bone and muscle of the best nations of the Old World are now citizenizing in the New Hemisphere, and coming, too, with their wealth and their power.

Nations which accumulate debts and never calculate to pay principal, only a low rate of interest, and struggle by taxation to do that, will ere long learn that, with an emi-

grating population, taxation has its limits, and they are reaching that limit. Royalty, too, is expensive; imperialism is extravagant; and under such conditions revolutions are inevitable.

The success of this great National Commemoration means an open view of the achievements in civilization of all the nations, at the Capital of the greatest of all, to be utilized and appropriated. This will in turn augment the wealth and power of the New World Columbus discovered.

I leave this subject by saying—

1st. This is to be a National and International Convocation.

2d. It must be held under the *jurisdiction* and *authority* of the National Government.

3d. That jurisdiction and authority cannot be acquired or exercised for this purpose in any one of the States, without a change in the fundamental law, and the uniform practice of the Government.

4th. It can only be held where the General Government has “exclusive legislation,” and unquestioned authority.

Respectfully submitted by

S. C. POMEROY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., 1339 K Street.

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